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4.99% property-tax hike set

Budget finalized. Last-minute retooling by city administration results in hike dropping below the proposed 5.17 per cent

JANE CAULFIELD
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After debating the proposed budget for two days, council on Wednesday approved the 2013 budget, which includes a property tax hike of 4.99 per cent and a dedicated 1.25 per cent going toward repairing and maintaining city roads.

The tax hike bounced around during deliberations on Day 2, finally dropping below the proposed 5.17 per cent after some last-minute retooling by city administration.

"There's always a few items we're not completely sure of when we bring the budget forward," city manager Murray Totland explained about the last-minute adjustments. "So we went back in to look at them."

Coun. Pat Lorje fought hard to keep taxes low while increasing a dedicated tax levee for roads to 1.25 per cent from a proposed one per cent, prompting Mayor Don Atchison to request that administration look to see if adjustments can be made.

Atchison said that he is happy with the results from the two-day budget meetings.

"With everything that's transpired over the last two days, it's really quite amazing" he said.

Atchison suggested that with a 1.25 per cent of taxes now going toward roads, the city will be spending more on roads in 2013 than it has in the past decade.

Follow Jane Caulfield on Twitter @janecaulfield

At a glance

- **Policing.** Budget increases for policing were approved, including the creation of four new full-time positions.
- **Online.** Council approved spending $1.2 million over two years for a new website.
- **Transportation.** $7.6 million will go toward planning for a north commuter bridge.
- **Weather.** Paying for snow removal in residential areas was a hot debate, but was defeated.

Mayor Don Atchison presides in chambers on Wednesday afternoon while the 2013 budget was deliberated by city council. JANE CAULFIELD/METRO

End of the road for the Gitchhiker

A man says he's happy to be wearing pants again after donning only underwear on a cross-country fundraiser for men's cancer research PAGE 3

N.Y.C. tragedy: Nobody lent a helping hand

Why did subway riders leave a man to die on the tracks after he was pushed? It was the 'bystander effect,' a psychologist says PAGE 5

A drop of golden sun

The Sound of Music is in the air this holiday season at Persephone Theatre PAGE 9

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NEWS 1

Saskatchewan takes proposals for private liquor stores

Business. Some off-sale operators say privatized stores could affect bottom line

MORGAN MODJESKI
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The Saskatchewan government says it's received dozens of inquiries about operating private liquor stores in the province since plans were initially announced and now they've officially issued a request for proposals.

The province says the outlets — two in Saskatoon and one in Regina — will meet demand in growing neighbourhoods.

However, some operators of off-sales in Saskatoon said they feel the privatized stores will impact their bottom line, as the privatized stores will be able to buy liquor for resale from the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority at a 16 per cent discount and keep later hours than SLGA stores.

"If there is another liquor store, we're going to have to compete with the price," said Moshiur Khandoker, manager of Colonial Cold Beer and Wine in Saskatoon.

"Right now, we have profit levels of 22 per cent and I might have to lower it to 15 per cent (and) maybe more than that — so obviously we're going to make a lot less money."

Others like Jacqueline Siemens, the supervisor at the Sutherland Off-Sale, said there are a number of factors that affect an off-sale's business, but said she too feels the privatized stores will have an impact.

"Ultimately it will deplete the pool of customers," said Siemens. "Instead of just having two options, then they'll have three."

She continued, "Any time you add another player to the game it's going to add a different spin to things.... It's no different than when you have another liquor store open up two blocks down from you — now you have to really be competitive on your pricing to make sure you have those customers still coming in."

The deadline for submissions is Jan. 30.

A decision is expected in late March.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

The province has officially requested proposals from those interested in operating three new private liquor stores planned for Saskatoon and Regina. Some off-sale operators say the privatized stores could impact their bottom line.

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Public buildings

Cancer society applauds asbestos registry

The Canadian Cancer Society says Saskatchewan's move to make public a registry of government buildings that contain asbestos is a good first step.

The society says Saskatchewan has shown leadership by being the first province in Canada to do so.

But the group says the province should go further and make the registry mandatory for all public buildings.

The registry is to include the legislature, court houses and equipment-storage buildings. But it will be voluntary for schools, hospitals and health-region buildings.

Asbestos is typically found in building materials such as insulation. It is not considered harmful if undisturbed, but renovations or construction work stir up hazardous fibres.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Environment

Minister defends cleanup of wells

Saskatchewan's energy and resources minister is defending the government's work to clean up orphaned oil-and-gas well sites. Orphaned wells are those whose owners either can't be located or are unable to pay the cleanup costs. Tim McMillan says 17 such wells have already been cleaned up. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Incident under review

Autopsy results pending after man dies in hospital following arrest

A Saskatchewan woman is looking for answers after her husband died in hospital soon after being released from police custody in Prince Albert.

Police have said Billy Ballantyne of the Little Red River Reserve was arrested at the Prince Albert hospital last Thursday morning after they got word about a disturbance.

The 44-year-old man, who had tuberculosis and the virus that causes AIDS, was taken to a police cell but started having trouble breathing and was returned to hospital.

Police say they're waiting for autopsy results, while the Parkland Health Region says it's reviewing what happened in the hospital.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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More personal-care home checkups needed: Auditor

The Saskatchewan government says it's working on a plan to improve how problems are handled at personal-care homes after the provincial auditor said many concerns have gone unchecked for years.

Auditor Bonnie Lysyk said in a report this week that the Ministry of Health documented inspection results at personal-care homes, but she said officials did not have a good system for tracking and following up on problems that were found.

Some of those problems included urgent safety issues like scalding hot water, medications not properly recorded or blocked fire exits.

"Without more frequent inspections of homes at high risk, vulnerable residents may be left in unsafe situations for long periods," she wrote.

Health Minister Dustin Duncan said Wednesday that he accepted the auditor's findings.

"I think for anybody it's disappointing and discouraging to hear that we still have situations like that and that a better job needs to be done in following up on inspections that may have these deficiencies pointed out," said Duncan.

"I'm like anyone, you know if this is a member of my family or constituent, I want to make sure that they're living in the best possible conditions," he added.

"For our seniors and among the most vulnerable in our populations, we need to work better with the personal-care homes to make sure that we don't have these situations in the future."

Details

Saskatchewan has about 245 licensed personal-care homes, which are privately owned facilities that provide housing, meals and personal care to seniors.

Part of the problem is that there's no central log for compliance issues. That means the ministry must rely on its staff to remember or search extensive paper records to outline the history of a particular home, according to the auditor's report.

The report makes five recommendations, including that high-risk homes be inspected more frequently. It also says the ministry should publicly report inspection results.

Duncan said it's time to update systems so that licences and compliance issues are all done electronically.

He also said the government is looking at posting inspection results online so that people can see how personal-care homes fared.

"Right now, in fact, under the legislation and the regulations, we cannot publicly report that. So we've already identified a way forward to be able to do that through changes to the regulations that we'll be bringing forward next year," said Duncan. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RBC Royal Bank

Want a great **short-term** mortgage rate?

The Gitchhiker hangs out with supporters and enjoys some food in his underwear at the event for his final destination in Truro, N.S. CONTRIBUTED

Gitchhiker's guide to fundraising

Cross-Canada. 21 pairs of underwear later, man concludes trip to spread awareness about men's cancer

ALYSSA MCDONALD
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The journey has ended for the Gitchhiker after three weeks, 7,000 kilometres, 21 pairs of underwear and $32,000 raised.

Now the Gitchhiker, Toronto's Mike McIntyre, is happy just to wear pants.

"I've got pants on, so I am pretty excited about that," said McIntyre, a day after he finished his cross-Canada tour.

Starting out in Vancouver on Nov. 14, McIntyre spent 21 days hitchhiking across the country, stopping in major cities — including Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw — to spread awareness about male "below-the-belt" cancer, all while wearing nothing but underwear from his sponsor, Stanfield's.

"I was really happy to be able to take something negative that happened to me, as a testicular-cancer survivor, and turn it into something so unbelievably positive, and get to see the country at the same time," said McIntyre, who has been cancer-free for more than five years.

McIntyre's goal was to make it to Truro, N.S., in 21 days to receive a $20,000 donation from Stanfield's.

After arriving in Truro on Dec. 4 to a parade of supporters, Stanfield's donated $27,000, adding to the more than $5,000 McIntyre raised on the road for the Canadian Cancer Society.

"We have a massive country filled with a lot of great people, but all those people are touched by cancer in some way, whether it be directly or a family member," said McIntyre.

This is McIntyre's second charity stunt with Stanfield's, including spending 25 underwear-clad days locked in an apartment in 2010, but he says there is no plan for a trilogy any time soon.

Lowlights

Gitchhiker's most interesting moments on the road:

- A "terrifying" drive through Northern Ontario in a big-rig truck during a snowstorm.
- Riding in the locked back of a Saskatchewan court service vehicle, the van used to transport inmates from Regina to Saskatoon.
- Jumping into the Salmon River in his underwear while parka-wearing bystanders watched.

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How could they not help him?

Subway horror in N.Y.C. Did 'bystander effect' stop crowd from rushing to help man who was pushed to his death?

MICHELLE CASTILLO
Metro World News in London

The ugly question is: Why?

Why did no one on a crowded subway platform in New York City help Ki-Suck Han when he was shoved onto the tracks to his death?

Blame it on the "bystander effect," a psychologist told Metro World News.

Or to put it another way, a "diffusion of responsibility" occurs, said Dr. Scott Bea of the Cleveland Clinic Main Campus in Cleveland, Ohio.

Another psychologist, Dr. Elizabeth Waterman, said the more people who see an event like this happen, the less likely they are to help a stranger.

"The pressure for people to take responsibility is diffused among the group of others; therefore, the individuals feel less pressure to help," said Waterman of Morningside Recovery Centers in Newport Beach, Calif.

Ki-Suck Han died on the tracks at the Times Square subway station.

A gruesome newspaper photo shows a solitary, tiny figure helplessly clawing at the platform as a Q train looms in the distance.

Ki-Suck Han's widow, Serim Han, holds a picture of him at a New York news conference Wednesday. She's reported as saying they had an argument before the tragedy. She tried to phone him later, but he never picked up.
BEBETO MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The suspect

A homeless man, 30-year-old Naeem Davis, was arrested on Wednesday in the New York City subway pushing death of Ki-Suck Han.

- **The video.** Security video showed a man fitting the suspect's description working with street vendors near Rockefeller Center, police said.
- **The charge.** Davis is in custody, facing a second-degree murder charge.

The New York Post ran the image on its cover, outraging many citizens.

Photographer R. Umar Abbasi defended himself Wednesday, saying he used his flash hoping the subway driver would see it and stop.

"The perp was running toward me. I was afraid he might push me onto the tracks," he wrote in the Post.

Bea said: "I would hypothesize that the photographer is trying to ... rationalize his own behaviour ...

"The public will have a strong tendency to judge those who were present negatively without understanding the powerful nature of 'the bystander effect.'"

No answers. In just 22 seconds, a man died

Psychologist Dr. Elizabeth Waterman tried to explain what could have gone on inside the minds of the subway bystanders — and the photographer who took the grim picture.

Q: The photographer claims there were 22 seconds between when the man fell and when he was crushed. Would there be any reason why people wouldn't step forward to help him within the "short" period of time?
A: They were possibly in shock and trying to process the events taking place. Also, the "bystander effect" likely played a role.

Q: The photographer is being faulted for not helping out and it looks like he is taking the brunt of the blame. What could he specifically be going through psychologically?
A: It seems as if he was trying to help the individual based on his explanation. However, I cannot say for sure.

He may have acted on instinct and done what came automatically to him in the name of helping the individual.

MICHELLE CASTILLO/METRO

Want a great **long-term** mortgage rate?

Bulldozing error

Hey, where's our lovely chateau?

Residents of a French village in Bordeaux are dumbfounded after discovering their 18th-century chateau was bulldozed "by mistake."

Officials in Yvrac said workers hired to renovate the grand manor and raze a small building on the same estate mixed them up. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Puerto Rico's test

Can Twitter keep you out of jail?

Puerto Rico has turned to Twitter in an experimental effort to help reduce the number of violent crimes.

Officials are allowing prison inmates to use a Twitter account and share their experiences of being in jail. The pilot program is dubbed Follow Me so you Don't Follow Me.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pippa and James Middleton leave the London hospital after visiting their sister, Kate.
DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Gotcha! DJs' trick gets info on pregnant Kate

The hospital fell for it — royally.

Two Australian radio disc jockeys apologized Wednesday after impersonating Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles in a prank call that got a London hospital to tell them all about Kate Middleton's condition.

The 30-year-old Duchess of Cambridge is pregnant and is being treated at the King Edward VII hospital in London for severe morning sickness.

A woman using the often-mimicked voice of Britain's monarch asked after the duchess' health — and was told by a nurse that Kate "hasn't had any retching with me and she's been sleeping on and off."

"She's sleeping at the moment and she has had an uneventful night.

"She's been given some fluids. She's stable at the moment,'' the kindly nurse informed the supposed queen and prince on the station's recording.

A dog yaps in the background while the alleged queen and prince talk about travelling to the hospital to check in on the patient.

"I would suggest that any time after nine o'clock will be suitable to visit," the nurse said. "We'll be getting her freshened up."

Australian radio personalities Mel Greig and Michael Christian of 2DayFM later apologized for the hoax — along with their station.

"We were very surprised that our call was put through. We thought we'd be hung up on as soon as they heard our terrible accents," they said in a joint statement with the station.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Good news at last for Ford

Is that a triumphant look on the face of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford? He has just learned he can stay in office at least until mid-January in a conflict case. Ontario Superior Court Justice Gladys Pardu on Wednesday granted him a stay of an earlier decision that would have forced him out of power early next week. This allows him to keep his job until a ruling is issued on his appeal. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

EU slams screen producers with $1.9B cartel fine

Brussels. 'There are victims — millions and millions of citizens,' says EU antitrust chief

The European Union on Wednesday imposed its biggest-ever cartel fine of about $1.9 billion on seven companies for fixing the market of television and computer-monitor tubes.

The EU's Commission ruled that, for a decade ending in 2006, the companies — including Philips, LG Electronics and Panasonic — artificially set prices, shared markets and restricted their output at the expense of millions of consumers.

EU antitrust commissioner Joaquin Almunia said that the companies' actions "feature all the worst kinds of anticompetitive behaviour that are strictly forbidden to companies doing business in Europe."

Joaquin Almunia, European commissioner for competition speaks in Brussels after the EU issued its largest-ever cartel fine. YVES LOGGHE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tubes were the essential part of television screens and computer monitors before they were replaced by LCD and plasma flatscreens. The cathode-ray tubes accounted for up to 70 per cent of the cost of a screen, the commission said.

Alumina added that the tubes' cost gave "an indication of the serious harm" the companies had caused. "There are victims — millions and millions of citizens."

Philips and LG Electronics, which acted jointly and separately, were fined a combined $1.3 billion; Panasonic was punished with a $203 million fine, adding up to more if combined fines and affiliates were included.

Despite its co-operation with the Commission probe, Philips said in a statement it planned to appeal the fine since it considered it "disproportionate and unjust."

Other companies fined were Samsung SDI, Technicolor, MTPD and Toshiba. Chunghwa of Taiwan escaped fines as it was the first to reveal the cartel to the EU. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRTC takes on Oprah

Oprah Winfrey appears at an interview with Late Show host David Letterman at his alma mater, Ball State University, in Muncie, Ind., on Nov. 26. Canada's federal broadcast regulator is taking on the television queen with a hearing next Tuesday into whether her Canadian network's programming fits the channel's educational mandate. Corus Entertainment Inc., which holds the licence for Oprah Winfrey Network in this country, said that nothing in the channel's licensing requirements prevents educational content from being "entertaining and engaging." MICHAEL CONROY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Real estate

Group launches takeover bid for mall owner

A consortium led by King-Sett Capital and including the Ontario Pension Board has launched a $4.4-billion takeover offer for Primaris Retail Real Estate Investment Trust, one of Canada's largest shopping mall owners. The deal, if successful, would also see RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust buy five regional malls and three other shopping centres currently owned by Primaris for $1.1 billion. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 100.84¢ (+0.16¢)

TSX 12,157.29 (+20.11)

OIL $87.88 US (-62¢)

GOLD $1,693.80 US (-$2)

Natural gas: $3.69 US (+15¢)
Dow Jones: 13,034.49 (+82.71)

Citigroup will slash 11,000 jobs worldwide

This file photo shows a Citibank branch in New York. Citigroup said on Wednesday that it will cut 11,000 jobs, mainly from its consumer banking unit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Citigroup said Wednesday that it will cut 11,000 jobs, a bold early move by new CEO Michael Corbat. The cuts amount to about four per cent of Citi's workforce of 262,000.

The bulk of the cuts, about 6,200, will come from Citi's consumer-banking unit, which handles everyday functions like branches and checking accounts.

Citi said that it will sell or scale back consumer operations in Pakistan, Paraguay, Romania, Turkey and Uruguay and focus on 150 cities around the world "that have the highest growth potential in consumer banking."

U.S. banking blues

- Job cuts are a familiar template in a U.S. banking industry still under the long shadow of the 2008 financial crisis.
- Banks are searching for ways to make money as new regulations crimp some of their former revenue streams, like trading for their own profit or marketing credit cards to college students.
- Customers are still nervous about borrowing money in an uncertain economy. And they are still filing lawsuits over industry sins, like risky mortgage lending, that helped cause the crisis.

The bank did not say how many jobs it will cut in the United States.

Citi fared worse than other banks in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. It nearly collapsed, had to take two taxpayer-funded bailout loans, and became the poster child for banks that had grown too big and disorderly.

After a long stretch of empire-building, it has been shrinking for the past several years, shedding units and trying to find a business model that's more streamlined and efficient. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Index. Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy seen as most corrupt in EU

The countries worst hit by the European financial crisis are also perceived as being among the most corrupt in the European Union, and those perceptions appear to be getting increasingly negative, an international watchdog said in a new report released Wednesday.

Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index shows Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece with the lowest scores in western Europe.

The index measures the perception of corruption in the public sector and not the financial sector, but Transparency's Europe director Anne Koch said the results clearly indicate that people in the countries worst hit by the crisis perceive corruption to be widespread. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

By the numbers

96

In 94th place out of 176 countries, Greece is the lowest-ranked EU state in the corruption index. "It's ranked lower than countries like Colombia, Benin and Zambia ... which gives you pause for thought," said Transparency International's Anne Koch.

Air travel. WestJet reports record November load factor

WestJet Airlines Ltd. continues to enjoy strong demand as the airline recorded its fifth consecutive monthly record load factor in November amid a significant increase in passenger traffic.

The Calgary-based airline's planes flew 82.6 per cent full in the month, up from 77.6 per cent a year ago.

WestJet said it flew 114,000 more passengers in November than in the same month in 2011 as traffic increased 8.3 per cent on a 1.7-per-cent increase in capacity.

CEO Gregg Saretsky said November's load factor beat the previous record set in 2010 by 4.9 percentage points. THE CANADIAN PRESS

WestJet planes sit on the tarmac at Calgary Airport in this file photo. The airline flew 114,000 more passengers in November than in the same month in 2011. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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I'VE GOT THE HYPERBOLIC PLAGUE, AND THERE'S NO KNOWN CURE

HE SAYS...
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

I'm sick.

Not in the fun movie way where you get to take over cities and fight with Batman or Spider-Man.

Not in the whisky-commercial way where you whisper something amazing to your blond friend and her eyes go all wide because you're so darn naughty, you five-o'clock-shadowed bad boy.

And (this is the worst part) not even in the cough-cough cold-flu way where I get to admit that, yes, men are wimps and women are warriors and that's fine so long as I get some chicken soup and a pat on the head, many thanks.

No, instead I get to be sick in the way where you have a bunch of disparate symptoms and the doctors run tests and poke you with sticks and grimace at their clipboards before finally saying that your problem is "idiosymptomatic," which is doctorese for "I don't know. What do *you* think?"

Immune-system overdrive

My skin responds to soap as if it's a bar of plague (99.44 per cent pestilent), and to my clothes as if it's No. 30 sandpaper. You could get a reasonable steam going if I were to lie down in the middle of a sauna and you poured water on my groin.

Fortunately, I have a theory. I think, after many years of working in the businesses of newspapers, radio and the Internet, that I've become infected with the media.

I'll explain. My symptoms point to some sort of autoimmune problem, which sounds like I'm impervious to the War on the Car, but actually means that my body overreacts to everything.

For instance, my immune system is fighting a major battle on my face right now. I'm not sure what's at stake, but my nose appears to be a strategic ridge of some sort, perhaps as a lookout for the vast expanse of cheek that lies beyond. Sometimes I swear I can hear a little voice yell, "Charge!" though that may just be the mild fever.

My skin responds to soap as if it's a bar of plague (99.44 per cent pestilent), and to my clothes as if it's No. 30 sandpaper. You could get a reasonable steam going if I were to lie down in the middle of a sauna and you poured water on my groin.

On top of all that, previous illnesses have taught me that my blood clots too well. I'm a superhero, basically, though one of those anarchist ones who responds with disproportionate force.

Which brings me back to my theory that I've been infected with media: I don't mean that I've hooked up with Jennifer in the sports department or anything — I just mean that, after years spent in media organizations, my immune system has responded to problems like a typical journalist.

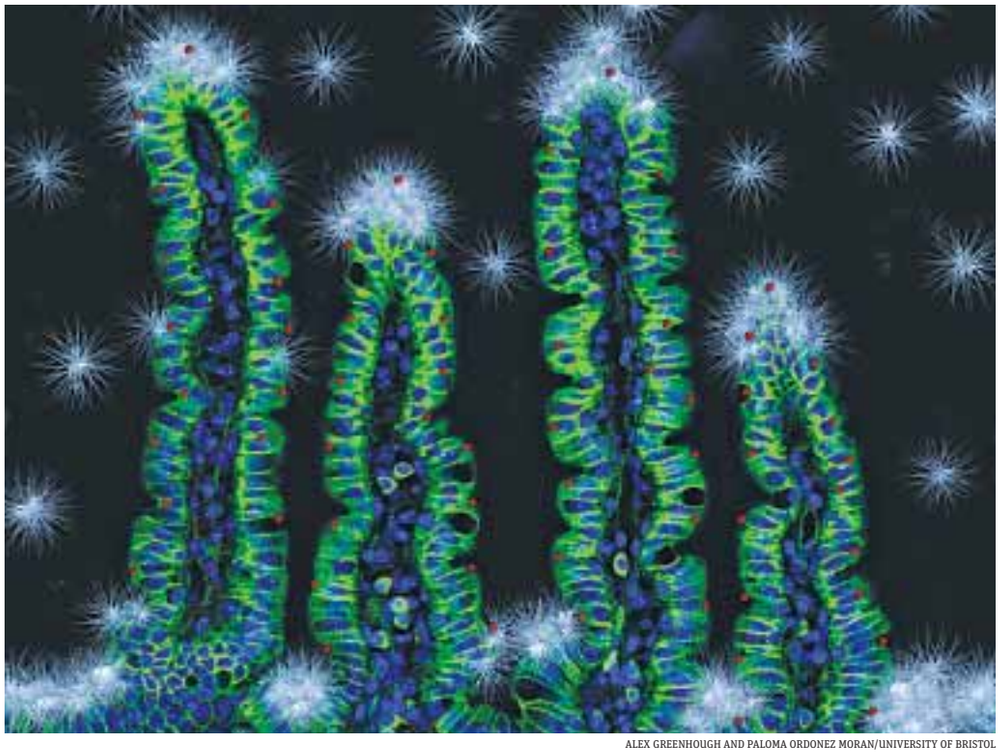
If a normal person noticed one bad thing in society — a stabbing, say — he'd call it an unfortunate fluke. Two instances, a coincidence. Three, a cause for concern.

But if a journalist notices one bad thing in society, it's a "tragedy." Two problems is a "rash." Three problems is an "epidemic." As you can see, we've been using medical terms all along.

I'm sure if you were to take a microscope and look into my bloodstream, you'd see a bunch of T cells wearing press hats and carrying notebooks, scurrying around in a panicked clot asking frantic questions in unison, ostensibly at invading viruses but often at nothing — or at a red blood cell shaped like a celebrity.

Happily, I know the best way to shut down a journalist. I plan to get ego massages until this problem subsides.

My gut tells me it's Christmas soon



ALEX GREENHOUGH AND PALOMA ORDONEZ MORAN/UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Science photography

Snowy close-up of human intestine

This Christmas scene, reminiscent of festive trees, is in fact an extreme close-up of a human intestine. It was captured by Alex Greenhough and Paloma Ordonez Moran of the University of Bristol, U.K., who are researching colorectal cancer. The "snow" was added by the scientists using a photo-editing program. METRO

Q&A

Image was 'a bit of fun'

What is this image?
Alex Greenhough: It's a study of the human intestine using a confocal microscope, to detect the presence of certain proteins and cell nuclei in the organ.

More specifically, my colleague and I are studying the protein beta-catenin to understand why it sometimes becomes deregulated in cells of the intestine and why it leads to the development of colorectal cancer.

By doing this research, we hope to further the understanding of cellular mechanisms that determine whether cells become cancerous, which we hope will lead to new opportunities for cancer prevention and therapy.

But this image seems more than science to you.
AG: Yes, the organized crypt-villus structures (of the intestine) in the image reminded me of Christmas trees. When I heard about the university's Art of Science photo competition, I remembered the image we had captured during our research, so I quickly decorated the trees with snow (white) and baubles (red) using Photoshop software as a bit of fun.
What do you hope the audience will take away from your image?
AG: That scientists are imaginative and artistic, and not the stereotypical eccentrics in white coats. METRO

Metropolitan Panel

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Would you pay $7 for Starbucks' new 'Geisha' bean coffee?

0%
MAYBE. IF I HEAR GOOD REVIEWS
83%
NO. THE LATTE FACTOR IS BAD ENOUGH FOR MY BUDGET
17%
YES. BUT IT BETTER BE THE BEST COFFEE OF MY LIFE

Twitter

@SaskGregger: Does "de-fragging" still work? Did it ever work? #cpuproblems

@dummy306: being sick, ill or injured, it doesn't matter how old I am, I always still want to call my mommy. #tooproud

@evanneufeld: Next level laziness. Girl gets on the bus at Place Riel and off at commerce #twominutewalk

@BSnowsell: Fixing first, sweeping later. Good call #yxecc

@shrammie: If someone sends you to "Go;" their commission means nothing unless they also have the capacity to tell you to "Stay."

@T_rav10dler: To everyone in #yxe my bad on running out of gas on idylewylde yesterday during rush hour. #most-hated #thatguy #suckit #Saskatoon

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The von Trapp children adjust to life with their new governess Maria in The Sound of Music, playing at Persephone Theatre through Dec. 23. SIMON HIATT FOR METRO

The hills are alive in Saskatoon

The Sound of Music. Musical will be the largest in Persephone Theatre's history, and Christina Gordon aspires to make it among the most memorable

BACKSTAGE PASS
Simon Hiatt
saskatoon@metronews.ca

The Sound of Music has long been one of Christina Gordon's favourite things, but much like Maria and Captain von Trapp, the relationship had a rocky start before blooming.

"I auditioned for Gretl when I was six years old, and my sister auditioned for Liesl. And she got the role and I didn't and I was devastated," Gordon said.

Since those early traumatic casting decisions Gordon's association with the play has been entirely positive. Six years later she went on to play Liesl herself and is now serving as associate choreographer for the production at Persephone Theatre.

"I grew up with the Mary Martin Broadway recording and less the movie version, I love the show to bits, it's got such great heart and it's such an incredible story."

Her familiarity with not only the musical, but the impact it has had on the world, led the Campbell River, British Columbia native to surmise during rehearsals that she would likely be spending an extended period of time in Saskatoon this holiday season.

"It was a joke early on, they said 'we might extend.' I said 'you're going to extend, it's The Sound of Music, at Christmas, in Saskatoon'."

Quoted

"Luckily I know the show backwards, so I know when I can take the time to look at the kids and when I should really be concentrating on myself."
Christina Gordon

And her words proved to be prophetic. The show will have run for just over a month when it wraps up on December 23.

But the number of performances isn't the only factor making this musical epic. Persephone officials are describing it as the largest production in the theatre history. And it's Gordon's job to make sure all twenty-eight cast members are in the right place at the right time.

"The youngest one is very much a six-year old and it can be like having a wild border collie running around sometimes," she says with a laugh.

But Gordon has nothing but praise for the entire cast, which includes both professional equity actors and local community players. It also includes Gordon herself, who plays Sister Berthe. But she says it isn't too difficult wearing multiple hats in the production.

"Luckily I know the show backwards, so I know when I can take the time to look at the kids and when I should really be concentrating on myself,"

And despite the gruelling schedule, the reception to the show and love for the source material make it easy to get motivated.

"It's just stamina and get the show out there and have fun. Because if you're not having fun, get off the stage."

On stage

Few people have been as busy as Christina Gordon during the run of The Sound of Music, but actress Allison Walmsley may be able to give her a run for her money. In addition to playing the demanding role of Liesl, she's also in the third year of a Bachelor of Music degree at the U of S.

"It was very difficult to make the decision to begin with, but the chance to be in this wonderful production was too much of a pull," Walmsley said.

This is her first professional role, but as the oldest sister in a family that has included several foster children, it's one she identifies with.

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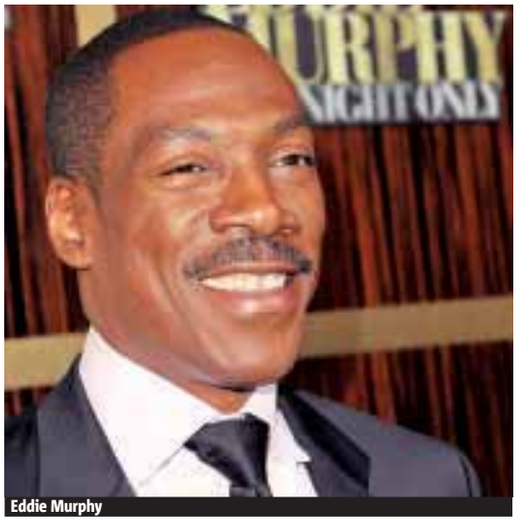
Eddie Murphy

Murphy's movies do little for studio profits

Eddie Murphy has earned the dubious honour of the Most Overpaid Actor in Hollywood, according to Forbes magazine's annual list. For every dollar that a studio paid Murphy for his last three movies, the studio earned $2.30, the worst rate of return for a star in the business.

His only film released this year, the poorly reviewed A Thousand Words, pulled in roughly $20 million worldwide but cost an estimated $40 million to produce.

Second on the list is Katherine Heigl, earning studios an average of $3.40 for every dollar she's paid.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Laxative lands LeAnn Rimes in more trouble

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

There was a time when LeAnn Rimes was world-famous for her talent.

Right? It's hard for me to remember that long ago.

Now she's just known for the petty drama with her long-suffering husband, Eddie Cibrian, and his ex, Brandi Glanville.

The latest?

Glanville is professing to a tabloid that she doesn't want Rimes around her sons, Mason, 9, and Jake, 5, because, according to her, they mistake her laxatives for candy.

"I, unfortunately, don't find her to be stable and I don't want her around my kids when Eddie's not there — or at least the nanny, his parents, someone," Glanville says of Rimes to Us Magazine.

"Mason, my eldest, ate some of Le's candies and got extremely ill. And Le's candies are laxatives. She has one in every purse. Mason found one on the floor and thought it was a Skittle! They don't keep sugar in the house," Glanville explains.

"He thought he finally found candy."

You know, you'd think in between learning shapes and colours, L.A. preschools would also teach life lessons to children being raised by celebrity parents.

They could teach the difference between a Skittle and a laxative or the difference between your nanny and your mother — the list is endless.

Rihanna ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Rihanna getting set to marry Chris Brown?

Anyone who follows Rihanna's Twitter feed knows that Chris Brown is definitely back in her life in a big way.

But the latest news still comes as a shock.

Rihanna is reportedly planning to marry Brown in a secret New Year's Eve ceremony while the pair are visiting her native Barbados for the holidays, according to Hollyscoop.

One person not too thrilled about the rumoured wedding? Rihanna's mom.

Quote

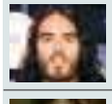
"She called Rihanna to yell at her, asking what she's doing with her life."

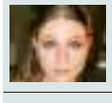
Source
Talking about Rihanna's mother's reaction to the news she may marry Chris Brown.

"She called Rihanna to yell at her, asking what she's doing with her life," a source says.

Twitter

@ZacharyQuinto
if you are taking pictures with your iPad: i have absolutely no interest in taking our relationship any further than the picture.


@rustyrockets
I'm in Melbourne. Where do I go? What do I do? Who will love me?


@RealMichelleT
Getting the Final Jeopardy answer. #Priceless

@Joan_Rivers
The IRS seized Lindsay's bank accounts to settle her tax debt of $233,904. Why bother? They'll get the same amount by returning her empties.

Easy to do holiday 'dos

Kristen Stewart's hair stylist Adir Abergel walks us through festive hairstyles that are simple enough to do on the fly in your bedroom, but look like you've spent hours in a salon.

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

The low chignon

"This look is classic and chic and can do no wrong," Abergel says. "It's both sophisticated and modern and will work for any kind of event you're heading off to."

1 Apply a volumizing styling whip to damp hair and blow-dry.

2 Create a centre part that is low and flat and secure a low pony-tail with a hair band.

3 Wrap the hair around the ponytail to create a low bun.

4 Secure your hair using some bobby pins.

5 Spray the entire look with hairspray in order to hold everything in place.

Get the look

SHINE: Frederic Fekkai Brilliant Glossing cream $25, fekkai.com

HOLD: Bumble & Bumble Curl Conscious Holding Foam $28, bumbleandbumble.com

Casual waves

"It's no surprise that we often see this look on Hollywood celebrities as well as models when they are off-duty. These easy waves are naturally beautiful, laid-back and glamorous at the same time," Abergel explains. "And it's also much easier to copy than you'd think."

1 Apply UV protectant spray to damp hair before blowing it dry.

2 Separate your dry hair from the front to the back behind the ears and clip up.

3 Take the back section of your hair, split it in two, and clip up one of the sides

4 Take one vertical section of hair from top to bottom

5 Grab a hot iron and roll away from your face (as you roll, make sure you twist at the same time).

6 Once the hair is heated through, gently take it off the roller and let it set so the waves cool in place.

7 Repeat the above on other side.

8 Once you've gone through all the hair, run your fingers though to get your desired look.

9 Finish off with some hairspray to keep your look for longer without allowing the hair to go stiff or sticky.

The pin-straight blow-dry

"This elegant look is perfect for showing off shiny, healthy hair, and who doesn't want that? Glossy hair is the perfect accessory to any outfit and this sleek look is the best way to show it off," Abergel says.

1 Apply a lifting and texturizing spray or gel to damp hair at the roots and blow dry by scrunching your hair until it's completely dry.

2 Divide the top of your hair into two sections. Take the front section and brush it forward with a large round brush. Wrap the hair around the brush, roll it up and blow-dry it out slowly in order to smooth the hair as much as possible. Repeat with the back section.

3 After smoothing the hair out, wrap each section around a large velcro roller and clip it into place.

4 Flat iron the rest of hair in order to straighten it one section at a time. Focus on the middle and the ends of the hair so that the volume is kept at the roots. Remove the rollers, comb out both sections and flat iron from the middle to ends of the hair only, not from the roots.

5 Set the look using hairspray and a glossing mist.

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Black and gold trending for 2013

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Get advice from any old-school interior designer and they'll all give you the same rule: Every room needs a bit of black. The sharp contrast that black offers helps any room come to life. For a long time we've been getting that contrast with very dark brown, but look out for black. While we haven't seen it since the early '80s, it's on its way back in home decor.

Black's revival came out of the very dark brown tones commonly used as well as out of the popularity of grey over the past few years. From fashion to home decoration, grey has become a staple in our lives, outshining the taupe and beige scene. That grey is now darkening itself into its truest form — black.

Metallic colours have predominately been cool tones like silver and nickel. Now things are warming up with champagne (a half-silver, half-gold mix) for contemporary homes and old brushed brass for traditional homes. The metallics have certainly heated up and any warm, golden tone will be hot for 2013.

Used in small spaces or large spaces

You might not think such a dramatic, dark colour like black would work in a small space, but if you're consistent with your tones, then any colour can work. Black adds a sense of drama and sophistication to a room and if you usually use your space at night, why not consider black as a main element.

Try to keep a balance

When mixing the black and gold colour combination in a modern space, use 70 per cent black and 30 per cent gold.

In more traditional settings, flip the coin and use 70 per cent gold tones and 30 per cent black to sharpen things up. Funny, the 70/30 rule applies to a lot of great design rules.

Organic hammered oval Angenam bowl

Hold the predictable fruit and nuts or a single candle for a golden illumination. $20, ikea.ca.

Floor-to-ceiling style

Black floors, door frames and bookcases create a dramatic statement. ralphlaurenhome.com.

Lassalle Vanity

Grand scale goes invisible with an all black vanity or desk. $2,500, crateandbarrel.com.

Gold pig bookends

From snout to tail, your books will be sandwiched in style. $35, cb2.com.

Desire Gold wallpaper

Add some deco glamour to your walls. $80/roll, grahambrown.com.

Classic Chambord French coffee press

Serve up morning coffee in style. $70, anthropologie.com.

Exotica Cheetah 4-x-6 pelt

The classic animal print is hand made of wool. $185, ecarpetgallery.com.

Hakkari Hurricane lamps

Harness nature's warm glow. From $32, crateandbarrel.com.

Gift wrapping everywhere! Pack presents the green way

What are greener alternatives to paper when wrapping gifts?

The presents have been opened, the kids are playing happily and you start stuffing all that wrapping paper into a recycling bag. Sure, it beats

QUEEN OF GREEN
Tovah Paglaro
green@metronews.ca

a garbage bag, but you know you could do even better.

Just look at those lovely kids — taking the extra step is the greatest gift you can give them.

Fabric wrap

Wrapping gifts with festive fabric is my favourite sustainable option! Keep it simple by purchasing beautifully made bags and accessories from small retailers or get crafty and make your own.

Folding fabric as gift wrap is also pretty simple and the end results can be spectacular. Whether you're giving wine, flowers, a box or some irregular shaped delight, you'll appreciate the step-by-step folding tutorials at furoshiki.com.

Get creative

Who says that gifts need to wrapped in wrapping? A boxed item can be wrapped in a scarf. Tea towels can hide wine bottles. And socks stuffed into a paper towel roller make for a fun surprise.

Maybe the kids in your house would enjoy making their own wrapping? Large bolts of cloth can be decorated with fabric paint and reused year after year. Gifts in cardboard boxes are already wrapped — just unleash the children's creativity directly on the box.

Post-consumer wrap

If you are going to wrap a gift in paper, look for wrap that is printed on 100 per cent recycled paper, with a high post-consumer percentage. Paper should be processed chlorine-free and printed with vegetable-based ink.

Bows and buttons

It's not just the paper that causes problems.

Those bows and ribbons are a mysterious assortment of plastic, making them difficult to recycle at the end of their life. It also takes a lot of resources to produce and ship them.

Obviously, reuse the ones you have on hand. But once they've been used up, replace them with fabric ribbon and buttons. Or take your inspiration from nature and decorate with felt, pinecones, pressed flowers and other bits or beauty located in your backyard.

Try making your own gift wrap out of festive fabric. ISTOCK IMAGES

It can be fun to make your own gift tags and decorations, but if crafty isn't your thing, turn to Etsy or your local holiday market. There are lots of artisans who'll appreciate your green holiday buying power.

Have questions for the Queen of Green? Write to tpaglaro@davidsuzuki.org or tweet @DavidSuzukiQoG

Christmas dinner

Keeping dinner hot and ready

How does the Butler keep a Christmas dinner hot for the fancy people you work for? I just want to keep it warm for my family to make my life easier.
— Anxious Holiday Cook

CHARLES THE BUTLER
askcharlesthebutler@metronews.ca
For more, visit charlesmacpherson.com

Dear Anxious Holiday Cook:

That's a great question considering all the money and work that goes into preparing Christmas dinner.

So what is this great secret? Well, timing is one of the most important issues when cooking in the kitchen. You ideally want as much of your meal to be ready at the same time, but chefs (and Butlers) still have another trick up our sleeves. It's called "a Bain Marie" — a fancy French term for water bath or double boiler.

So how does this relate to your question? Well, when chefs make certain foods like mashed potatoes and gravy — or meat — they may put the pot into a hot water bath. This keeps them perfectly hot, moist and ready to serve without cooking them further. You can cover the pot or container you are going to put in the hot water bath with saran wrap. The water bath allows you to hold the items at a hot temperature so that you can serve them all at the same time. Although you can go much longer, I don't keep food in the pots for longer than 30 to 40 minutes.

There's a lot of work and preparation that goes into Christmas dinner. ISTOCK IMAGES

With Hanukkah stretching over eight nights, offer variety of treats

"The Spice Cookies are loosely inspired by the German Christmas favourite Pfeffernusse and are actually more closely related to an Italian spice cookie," write Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi in Jerusalem: A Cookbook.

Ottolenghi and Tamimi, who both emigrated from Jerusalem to London, England, say the cookies are popular at their four Ottolenghi restaurants over the period of Hanukkah and Christmas.

The Festival of Lights begins at sundown Saturday and ends on Dec. 16.

Spice Cookies

This recipe makes 16 cookies. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. Soak currants in brandy for 10 minutes.

2. In bowl, mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, spices, salt and dark chocolate. Mix with a whisk.

3. In stand mixer fitted with beater attachment, place butter, sugar, vanilla and lemon and orange zest and beat to combine, about 1 minute. With mixer running, slowly add egg and mix for about 1 minute. Add dry ingredients, currants and brandy. Mix until it comes together.

4. Gently knead dough in bowl with hands until it comes together. Divide dough into chunks (each about 50 ml/1/4 cup) and shape each chunk into a perfectly round ball. Place balls on baking sheets lined with parchment paper, spacing 2 cm (3/4 inch) apart, and let rest in fridge at least 1 hour.

5. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F). Bake cookies 20 minutes, until tops firm up but centres are still slightly soft. Remove from oven; let cool 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack. While cookies are still warm, whisk together glaze ingredients until a thin and smooth icing forms. Pour 15 ml (1 tbsp) of the glaze over each cookie, leaving it to drip and coat cookie with a very thin, almost transparent film. Finish each with 3 pieces of candied peel placed at the centre. Leave to set and serve. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ JERUSALEM BY YOTAM OTTOLENGHI AND SAM TAMIMI

Dietary restrictions

Please note, the recipes on this page may not meet specific dietary restrictions.

Ingredients

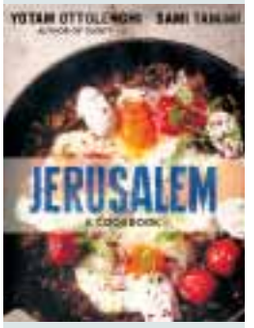
- 175 ml plus 30 ml (3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp) currants
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) brandy
- Scant 500 ml (2 cups) all-purpose flour
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) best-quality cocoa powder
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) baking powder
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) baking soda
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each ground cinnamon, allspice, ginger and nutmeg
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) salt
- 150 g (5 oz) good-quality dark chocolate, coarsely grated
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 150 ml (2/3 cup) superfine sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each grated lemon zest and grated orange zest
- 1/2 large free-range egg
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) diced candied citrus peel

Glaze

- 45 ml (3 tbsp) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 325 ml (1 1/3 cups) icing sugar

Cookbook of the Week

Unique food and city



For the book Jerusalem: A Cookbook, Yotam Ottolenghi teams up with his friend and co-owner of his restaurants, Sami Tamimi. Both men were born in Jerusalem in the same year: Tamimi on the Arab east side and Ottolenghi in the Jewish west.

In this book, they explore the cuisine of their home city and present a collection of recipes that reflects a melting pot of Muslim, Jewish, Arab, Christian and Armenian communities.

Among the recipes are: Seafood and Fennel Soup, Kofta B'Siniyah, Sweet Filo Cigars and more. METRO

Delicious Cheesecake — and intriguing story

Everyone knows — or at least every Jew knows — the story of Hanukkah's origins, the story of how just a tiny amount of oil miraculously burned for eight days. And they know that, in the spirit of that story, Hanukkah is celebrated in part by eating foods fried in oil, such as latkes and doughnuts.

But in much of the world, Hanukkah also is celebrated by eating salty cheeses. And for that, there is another and equally fascinating story.

The short version goes something like this: Around 2 B.C., a Jewish widow saved her people by ingratiating herself with an enemy general, plying him with salty cakes of cheese, then wine to quench the thirst it brought. When he fell into a drunken stupor, she lopped off his head with his own sword.

When this story became associated with Hanukkah is unclear.

Olive oil became an important part of this festival of lights and the foods eaten during the celebration were a nod to this, as was the story of the miraculous and essential oil. Latkes, or pancakes fried in oil, were initially made of eggs and flour or sometimes cheese, and this could be when the story of the salty cheese cakes took off.

This recipe serves six. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. Heat oven to 375 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Arrange bay leaves in the centre of the parchment in an 8-inch circular pattern.

2. In bowl, beat eggs, vanilla and half of orange zest. Beat in ricotta, then flour. Mix should form thick batter. Scoop batter onto arranged bay leaves on the prepared baking sheet. Use a silicone spatula or the back of a spoon to spread the batter into an 8-inch circle over the bay leaves. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden.

3. Meanwhile, in saucepan over medium-low heat, combine honey and remaining orange zest. Heat for several minutes until thin and warmed.

Ingredients

- 6 fresh bay leaves
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Grated zest of 2 oranges, divided
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup honey (orange blossom if possible)
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds

4. When cake is done, use wooden skewer to poke holes in the top. Drizzle a third of warmed honey over cake, letting it soak into surface. Place serving plate over cake, then overturn so cake is on plate. Use skewer to poke holes in the surface again, then drizzle the rest of the honey over the cake.

5. Let the cheesecake rest for at least 30 minutes to allow the honey to soak in. Sprinkle with poppy seeds, then cut into 6 wedges and serve warm or at room temperature.

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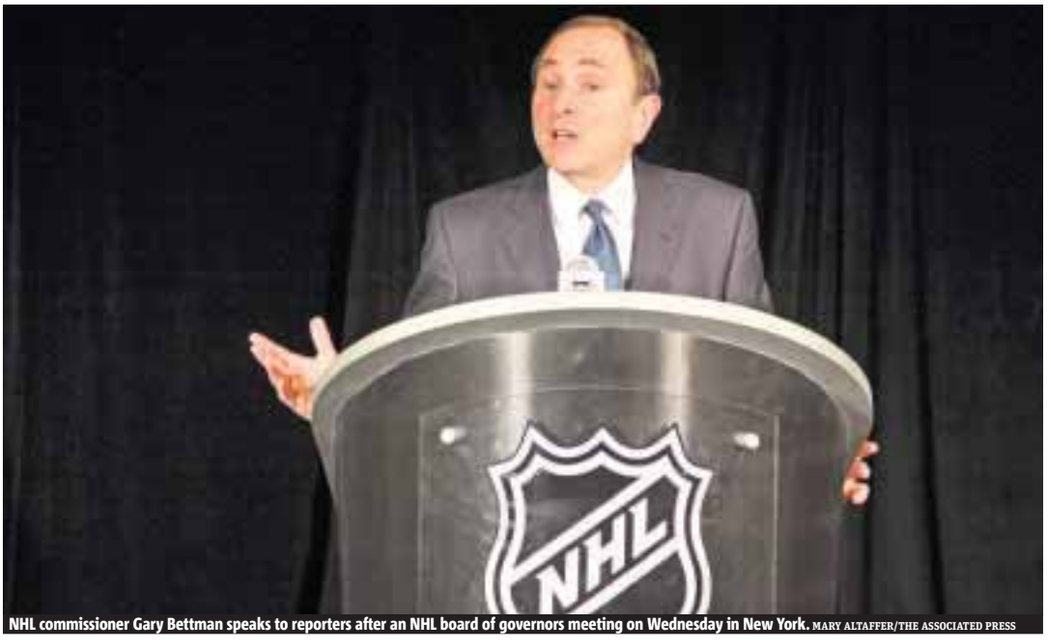


NHL commissioner Gary Bettman speaks to reporters after an NHL board of governors meeting on Wednesday in New York. MARY ALTAFFER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lockout talks gain steam in Gotham

Day 81. Sense of urgency increases as sides try to strike deal

A wave of optimism gave way to tension as the NHL and NHL Players' Association spent a second straight day trying to hammer out a collective bargaining agreement.

The sides exchanged proposals during a series of brief meetings on Wednesday afternoon, according to sources, in a bid to close the final gap in negotiations that have spanned more than five months.

The urgency was evident as a group of six league owners shuffled between internal meetings and short sessions with players and union staff at a hotel in midtown Manhattan.

By the numbers

50

According to sources, the owners are discussing a possible 50-game season. They felt a 60-game schedule was too ambitious given the current timeline.

At one point, Boston Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs could be seen having an animated conversation with deputy commissioner Bill Daly outside the negotiating room. Meantime, players paced the halls while speaking on their cellphones.

Even though the specific details of the new offers weren't known, one aspect revealed another hurdle the sides have to cross — the length of the deal. The league's proposal called for a 10-year term while the NHLPA continued to favour a shorter contract, according to sources.

With tensions rising, commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr kept themselves out of negotiation sessions for a second straight day. However, Bettman did provide a brief update to reporters after a two-hour gathering of the board of governors, saying he was "pleased" with how things were progressing.

That was about all he was willing to reveal.

"We are pleased with the process that is ongoing and out of respect for that process I don't have anything else to say and I'm not going to take any questions," said Bettman.

The two sides have cleared their schedules for the rest of the week after successfully getting an adjournment from Quebec Labour Board hearings that had been scheduled in Montreal for Thursday and Friday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Splitting the pie

Both the league and union proposed a 50-50 revenue split last month, but they remain separated on payments to be made outside the system to help ease the transition from the previous deal, which saw the players receive 57 per cent.

- The NHL has offered $211 million in deferred compensations while the union is asking for $393 million.

CFL

Riders shake up coaching staff

The Saskatchewan Roughriders announced Wednesday that coaches Alex Smith, Mike Walker and Kris Sweet have not been retained by the club and will not be on staff next season.

Linebacker coach Smith had been with the Riders for 16 years, defensive line coach Walker was with the team for two and offensive line coach Sweet was with the team for one.

METRO

WHL

Blades have no answer for Chiefs

Eric Williams turned away 30 of 31 shots as the Spokane Chiefs defeated the Blades 4-1 in Western Hockey League action on Wednesday in Saskatoon.

Todd Fiddler, Liam Stewart, Blake Gal and Mitch Holmberg scored for Spokane (21-7-1).

Matej Stransky scored Saskatoon's (13-14-1) lone goal in the loss.

The Blades resume their schedule on Saturday when they host the Regina Pats.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL. Private service memorializes Belcher

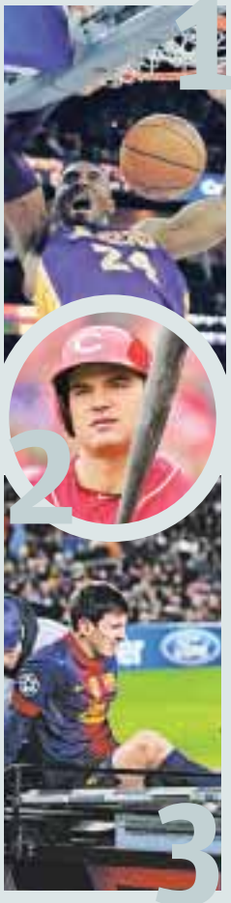
Several players for the Kansas City Chiefs attended a memorial service for teammate Jovan Belcher, who killed his girlfriend and then fatally shot himself in the head.

Retired Chiefs Hall of Famer Bobby Bell said after the private hour-long service that general manager Scott Pioli, who witnessed Belcher's suicide on Saturday, spoke during the service. Bell said an uncle of Belcher also spoke.

Several Chiefs players declined comment after the service. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chiefs quarterbacks Brady Quinn, left, and Matt Cassel leave a memorial service for teammate Jovan Belcher on Wednesday in Kansas City, Mo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in pictures



1 NBA. Bryant reaches 30K plateau

Kobe Bryant became the youngest player in NBA history to eclipse 30,000 career points and only the fifth overall to hit that mark on Wednesday night in the Los Angeles Lakers' 103-87 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 MLB. Votto gets another O'Neill honour

Cincinnati Reds slugger Joey Votto is the winner of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame's Tip O'Neill Award for the third straight year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

3 Soccer. Messi hobbled in Barca's draw

Lionel Messi was carried off with a knee injury as Barcelona was held to 0-0 by Benfica in the Champions League on Wednesday.

The club said the initial assessment was Messi had an outer bruise to his left knee. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Horoscopes

Aries
March 21 - April 20
If you start something new today, there is every chance it will succeed — so get busy! Mars in the career area of your chart gives you the drive and the ambition you will need to undertake a major new project.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Play to your strengths today and you won't go far wrong. Decide what it is that means the most to you and focus on it to the exclusion of everything else. If others say you are being selfish, take it as a compliment!

Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You now have the drive and the determination to accomplish something out of the ordinary. The fact that others say it cannot be done — or should not be done — will encourage you to prove them wrong. You love a challenge.

Cancer
June 22 - July 23
A breakthrough of some kind is possible but you have to be proactive. If you just sit there waiting for events to come round your way, you may be waiting a very long time. What can you do to speed things along?

Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Good luck will come to you over the next 24 hours but not in the form of material things. Most likely, it will be in the shape of a friend whose wise words are worth more than all the gold you could carry.

Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You are under fortunate stars at the moment and if you don't quite believe that now, you will start to believe it over the next few days. The more you think and act lucky, the more luck you will attract.

Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It is probably going too far to claim that you can transform your life over the next 24 hours but you can certainly change it in important ways. You are already moving in the right direction. All you have to do is take longer strides.

Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
If you feel compelled to move in a new direction, you must not fight against it. It may seem strange to you now but over the next few days you will see that it is entirely to your benefit. Trust your instincts.

Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Why are you so defensive? Why do you insist on believing that the world is against you and you need to protect yourself? It's time to snap out of it. Reality is what you want it to be, so lighten up and live.

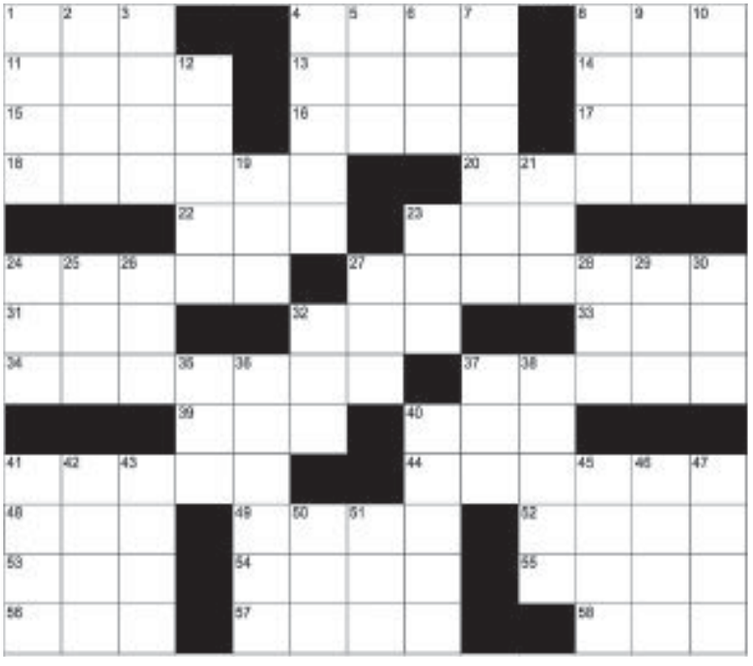
Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Put yourself in the spotlight today so that employers and others in authority can see who you are and what you can do. Yes, some people may think you are being too pushy but better that than you not pushing at all.

Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you want to make changes then now is the time. Don't take it as a bad sign if certain people try to talk you out of it or place obstacles in your path. They're just afraid you'll succeed. And you will.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Some people never stop moaning about how tough life is, but it isn't true. Each day can be a new beginning and each day can be full of every joy imaginable. Make love and laughter your watchwords today. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

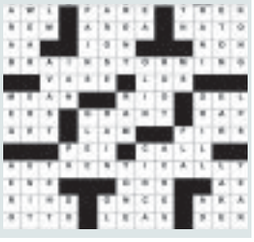
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Actor James Van — Beek
4. Cigarette substances
8. Globe
11. Brainstorm
13. Beatles Meter Maid
14. By way of
15. Glitch or hitch
16. Paradise
17. Height abbr.
18. Vacation necessity
20. Wooded valleys
22. Volleyball need
23. "I am — "
24. Scolds
27. Peter Falk drama
31. Bullring cheer
32. Food morsel for Mister Ed
33. Dinghy mover
34. Chic
37. Over yonder
39. Want ad abbr.
40. Ocean
41. Trample
44. Grease pencil, for one
48. Hit lightly
49. Dueling sword
52. Yearn
53. Letter after ka in Spanish
54. Math calculation
55. Halt
56. Ink holder
57. Ogle
58. Winding curve

Down
1. Computer data holder
2. Charlotte Rae on The Facts of Life
3. Paper quantity
4. Halloween candy
5. Pitch in
6. Map abbr.
7. Summer shoe
8. Racetrack shape
9. Brook
10. Belfry dwellers
12. Broker
19. Matter for the courts
21. Aussie bird
23. Tippler
24. Eggs
25. — in the Family
26. Indicates maiden name
27. Family pet
28. One of The Three Stooges
29. Cheers was one
30. Source for raw metal
32. Toronto province
35. Herd
36. Implore
37. Some like it hot
38. Heavenly strings
40. Daub
41. Ladder rung
42. Yarn
43. — Mike with Mike Bullard
45. Stringed toy
46. The Dukes of Hazzard spin-off
47. Bodybuilder's count
50. Prior to
51. Wide shoe spec

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

6		9		1	5			3
	8		9					7
	2		7				1	
9							5	
		6	8		9	7		
	1							4
	5				7		9	
3					4		8	
8			1	2		3		

Yesterday's Sudoku

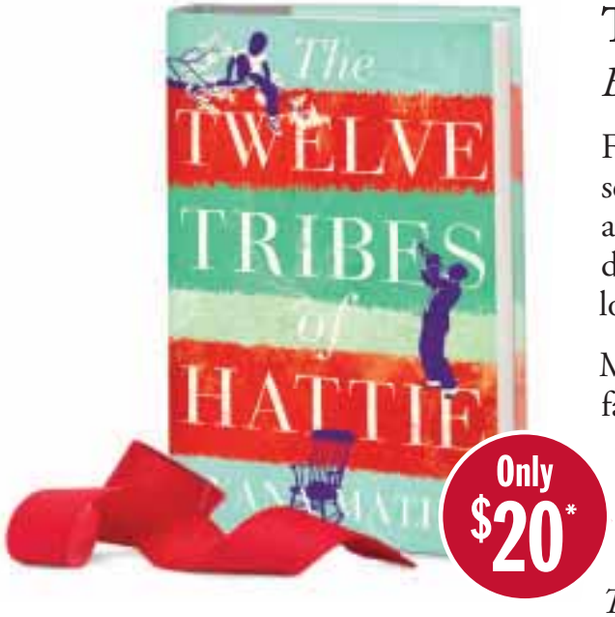
8	2	5	3	6	9	1	4	7
9	3	4	8	1	7	2	6	5
1	7	6	4	2	5	8	3	9
2	5	3	6	7	8	4	9	1
4	9	7	2	3	1	6	5	8
6	1	8	9	5	4	7	2	3
3	4	9	7	8	6	5	1	2
7	6	1	5	9	2	3	8	4
5	8	2	1	4	3	9	7	6

Sharability

easy hard

Heather's Pick

Another great book personally chosen by Indigo's
Chief Booklover and CEO Heather Reisman.



The Twelve Tribes of Hattie

By Ayana Mathis

From its devastating first chapter to its perfect last sentence, *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* never ceases to astonish. Ayana Mathis' first novel is one of the strongest debuts of 2012, and will be talked about, shared and loved for years to come.

Mathis tells the story of Hattie Shepherd as she and her family navigate, negotiate, and survive the twentieth century. Each chapter moves from child to child, and through them Mathis paints a portrait of a mother who has sacrificed everything, not for her children's happiness, but for their mere existence. *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* is an accomplishment in that even while Mathis shows us the depths of selfishness, cruelty, and betrayal, she finds moments to let a ray of light shine through dirty windows. She allows her characters to be real – infuriatingly and often tragically real – but so real that you'll be frustrated at their failings and joyful at their moments of quiet optimism.

The Twelve Tribes of Hattie is a book that will live with you long after the last page. It is a book that showcases the talent of a powerful new voice in fiction, and it is certainly a book that deserves to be on everyone's list this holiday.

I loved, loved, loved this book.

It's our friends & family event in-store and online
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